



# 2023/24 OREGON SYMPHONY ANNUAL REPORT

*MOVING MUSIC FORWARD*

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Nothing compares to hearing an orchestra like the Oregon Symphony perform live onstage. Throughout my career, I have consistently marveled at the ability of music to bring people together and touch their hearts in mysterious, profound ways. It is now my immense privilege to lead one of the very finest orchestras in the country, and to witness its far-reaching impact on a daily basis.

As my first year as President comes to a close, I'm honored to reflect on what we've accomplished together. More than 110 concerts, with rave reviews in *The Oregonian*, OPB, and *Willamette Week*. 500,000 people reached through our performances, community events, and radio broadcasts. Partnerships with more than 100 schools that connect students

directly with the musicians of the orchestra. Four new commissions. And five shows that sold out the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall.

In that time, I've been inspired by the deep love that Oregonians clearly have for their orchestra – from the \$1.83M we raised in April at our annual Gala, to the tens of thousands of ticket sales and donations from private foundations, government bodies, and everyday individuals. Thank you for your support. I look forward to seeing you at the concert hall for another remarkable season.

Isaac Thompson, President & CEO



David Danzmayr, Jean Vollum Music Director



Storm Large performs onstage

## MUSIC IS FOR EVERYONE

In our 2023/24 season, the Oregon Symphony continued **to unite our community with more than 100 nights of musical excellence**. In a year of turmoil both at home and abroad, the Symphony brought thousands of people together each week to experience hope, resilience, and wonder – and the power of music to connect us to each other.

Under Jean Vollum Music Director David Danzmayr, the orchestra delivered night after night of superb artistry and innovative programming for tens of thousands of concertgoers. Beginning with Yo-Yo Ma's spectacular, sold-out performance on Opening Night, the season encompassed masterpieces like Mozart's *Requiem* and Beethoven's Fifth, collaborations with stars like Common and John Malkovich, groundbreaking works by local composers, and genres ranging from taiko to Tejano.

**No matter what music or tradition, there is a place for it on our stage – and a place for you in the hall. We are proud to be *your* Oregon Symphony.**



Gil Shaham



Conrad Tao



Cypress Hill



Yo-Yo Ma



Wynton Marsalis



Simone Porter



Sarah Kwak, Janet & Richard Geary  
Concertmaster Chair



Principal Percussionist Michael Roberts and Composer-in-Residence Andy Akiho perform "Sculptures"

## ONSTAGE, THE OREGON SYMPHONY...

**Held 113 performances** at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, Smith Auditorium at Willamette University, the Alberta Rose Theater, and the Reser Center.

**Welcomed 162,211 patrons** to our concerts, including 21,000 first-time ticket-buyers.

**Supported an ensemble of 77 full-time professional musicians**, who also taught private lessons, played with other ensembles, and participated in dozens of educational and community programs.

**Performed alongside 63 globally renowned guest artists**, including actor John Malkovich, violinists Simone Lamsma and James Ehnes, singers Storm Large and Kristin Chenoweth, conductors Jonathon Heyward and Kristiina Poska, and pianists Conrad Tao and Timo Andres.

**Presented 23 boundary-pushing Specials**, including hip-hop legends Cypress Hill; Japanese taiko drummers DRUM TAO; music from *The Legend of Zelda*, *Halo*, and *Portal 2*; the songs of Selena, "the Queen of Tejano"; and symphonic arrangements of Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon*.

**Commissioned four pieces of new music**, including the GRAMMY-nominated *Sculptures* by Composer-in-Residence Andy Akiho, played by drumming on the 10-foot-tall ceramic heads of artist Jun Kaneko.

Featured women or people of color as a composer, conductor, or guest performer on 82% of all concerts.



A Symphony musician marks a score



Deanna Tham, Harold & Arlene Schnitzer  
Associate Conductor



Isabel Marie Sanchez



Kristiina Poska



Curtis Stewart



Jonathon Heyward



Gabriella Smith



John Malkovich



Students line up for a youth concert

## MUSIC IS ESSENTIAL TO THE HUMAN SPIRIT

Music connects us with others, improves our health, and makes us happier. But many Oregonians face barriers to music because of poverty, chronic illness, homelessness, or lack of transportation.

**We believe everyone should have access to the transformative power of live music.**

Last year, our musicians led nearly 150 free events that brought music out of the concert hall and into schools, libraries, and public spaces across Oregon and SW Washington. We held chamber concerts, music education programs, and hands-on activities, filling our entire region with the sound of music.

These programs reached thousands of adults and children without access to the arts, allowing them to hear, play, and create music within their own community – and providing many with their first introduction to classical music.

Thank you for your support of these lifechanging programs.



An aspiring violinist examines a bow

97% of educators said their students learned something new about music at an Oregon Symphony event.



Students from McKay High School visit the concert hall

## IN OUR COMMUNITY, THE OREGON SYMPHONY...

**Hosted 143 Education and Community programs for people without access to live music**, including recitals, private lessons, songwriting workshops, youth concerts, music therapy sessions, and classroom curricula.

**Reached 19,821 K–12 children** with our in-school programming, including Kinderkonzerts, Link Up, Young People's Concerts, and coaching sessions. **65% were enrolled at Title I schools or from low-income backgrounds.**

**Presented 789 youth musicians from 40 local ensembles** for our Prelude Performances series, held in the lobby of the concert hall before Classical concerts.

**Received 224,243 views of our digital Symphony Storytime series** in English and Spanish, and **held four in-person Storytimes** at the Hollywood Library for the first time since 2019.

**Welcomed 1,915 community members, educators, and nonprofit partners** to our free Celebration Concert at the Schnitz, which featured performances by 17-year-old double bassist Maggie Carter, the Metropolitan Youth Symphony, and the Young Composers Project of Fear No Music.

**Partnered with more than 100 public and private schools** across Oregon and SW Washington to support educators and bring Oregon Symphony musicians into the classroom.



Children discover instruments at a musical petting zoo



Students perform at the Link Up concert



Music Director David Danzmayr conducts a student orchestra



Woodburn High School Mariachi gives a Prelude Performance



The Symphony woodwinds play at a Kinderkonzert



Symphony musicians play a holiday concert for children in cancer treatment



Artist-in-Residence Simone Lamsma gives a recital for Portland seniors



Musicians and houseless families perform together at the Lullaby Project concert

## THE POWER OF MUSIC AS MEDICINE

Music heals. It reduces anxiety. Strengthens motor skills. And eases the symptoms of diseases like diabetes, cancer, and MS.

We are proud to bring music to dozens of health care providers, senior centers, and shelters, using melody, harmony, and rhythm to improve wellness and quality of life.

### Last year:

**Our musicians performed a virtual holiday concert for 120 children in cancer treatment**, bringing joy and hope to hospitals nationwide.

**Artist-in-Residence Simone Lamsma led music therapy activities for people with disabilities or living with dementia**, such as playing along on other instruments or moving to the music with scarves.

**We held songwriting workshops and community concerts for more than 100 people experiencing homelessness** through partnerships with Path Home and Rose Haven Day Center, using music to support families and improve quality of life during the extreme trauma of homelessness.

In October, guest cellist Joshua Roman visited the Long Covid Clinic at OHSU, where he gave an intimate recital for 150 patients. Roman himself contracted severe Long Covid in 2021, and he shared the struggles that nearly ended his career, from brain fog to debilitating fatigue. Regardless, he has continued to perform, and even developed a new project, *Immunity*, about his illness.

Roman's visit demonstrated the immense, therapeutic power of music. One person told us, "It was so healing and revealing of the trauma we all have despite the world moving on from the pandemic. I heard many people crying, as did I, as I was surrounded by a group of people who understand, who believe each other, and the music that touched our souls."



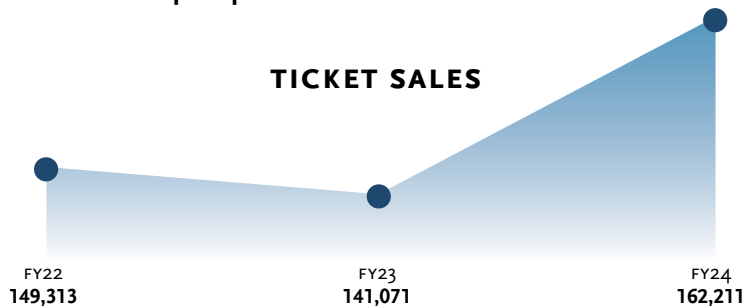


## ENSURING OUR ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

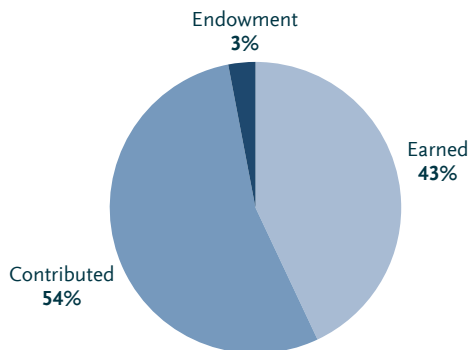
As Portland's largest performing arts organization, we are committed to our role as leaders in the area's cultural and economic life. Oregon Symphony concerts bring thousands of people into downtown Portland each week, where they not only enjoy great music, but eat at local restaurants, shop at local businesses, and spend the night at local hotels.

We are proud that our efforts to support our downtown core saw great momentum in 2023/24. Concert attendance grew significantly this season, with ticket sales and attendance at our community events climbing back toward pre-pandemic levels. This would not be possible without the many concertgoers, donors, and community partners who share our belief in the power of music.

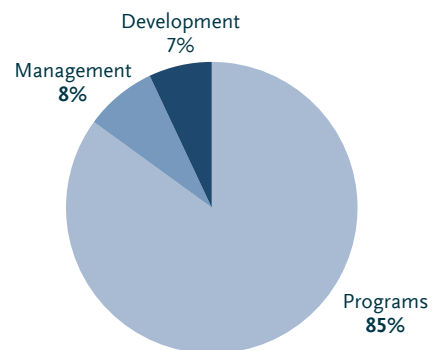
Thank you for making this tremendous impact possible.



### REVENUE: \$23.8M



### EXPENSES: \$23.4M



*Combined unaudited financials for the Oregon Symphony Association and the Oregon Symphony Association in Salem 7/1/23 through 6/30/24.*



OREGON  
SYMPHONY®

[give@orsymphony.org](mailto:give@orsymphony.org) | 503-416-6325 | 851 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 385, Portland, OR 97204-1339